June 25, 2019

The Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA) is pleased to support the Safe Housing for Families Act of 2019 (H.R. 1690), which was introduced by Rep. Jesus G. Garcia (D-IL) to address the preventable but fatal results of carbon monoxide poisoning. This legislation will require carbon monoxide detectors in public and assisted housing units where there exists or is ventilation from a fuel-burning appliance or fuel burning fireplace, or where there is an attached garage. Importantly, the legislation recognizes that funding for this requirement must be commensurate with the task at hand and authorizes robust funding of $300 million over a three-year period. We thank the staff of the House Committee on Financial Services for their hard and ongoing work on this critical bill.

The health and safety of residents is the number one concern of our members. Any conditions threatening the lives of families in public housing needs to be addressed immediately. This bill will address the dire consequences that can result from the absence of carbon monoxide detectors in residential units. PHADA recognizes this as a good start but also urges Congress, through appropriations, to address the billions of dollars in capital needs of public housing, which would go directly to maintaining and upgrading heating systems, roofs, plumbing and many other critical needs. Every day Congress fails to act is another day in which housing authorities must stretch dollars and postpone critical maintenance operations that would enhance the quality of life of public housing residents.

PHADA commends the leadership of Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) for moving this legislation forward as well as proposing the Housing is Infrastructure Act of 2019 which would authorize $70 billion in funding to address the capital needs of the public housing program. PHADA encourages all members of the Financial Services Committee to vote "yes" on H.R. 1690.